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The major purpose of this seventh-grade teaching unit on language is to expand the students' understanding of language as central to human activity. The purposes, methods, and commonalities of such disciplines as anthropology, psychology, linguistics, and rhetoric are defined within the framework of language study to suggest the scope of communications. The nature of communication breakdown is examined in James Marshall's "Walkabout" and Margaret Bowen's "Return to Laughter," and possible solutions to communication problems are indicated in a series of hypothetical letters written by a young man struggling with a hypothetical language in a country and culture widely different from his own. These letters are presented as written to the boy's uncle, who, in turn, relays back information and help from rhetoricians, anthropologists, and psycholinguists. The letters as well as sample lectures, discussion questions, procedural notes, and suggested activities cover a wide variety of information about the relationships between culture and language development. (JB)

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Unit 703

The People Who Study Language

TE 001 264

CAUTIONARY NOTE

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- UNIT 703 -

MATERIALS NEEDED

Marshall, James Vance. Walkabout

Brown, Margaret Smith. Return to Laughter (Garden City: Doubleday-Anchor, 1964.

TO THE TEACHER

The major purpose of this unit is to expand the students' view of language by studying the various disciplines within the general category of language study. Some of the purposes and methods of disciplines such as anthropology, psychology of language, linguistics, and rhetoric are examined with respect to their common interest in language. It is noted that the view of the descriptive linguist is but one of several perspectives.

Through the examination of the disciplines within language study, this unit serves to further introduce the student to the range of the materials he is now beginning to use.

It is strongly recommended that this unit be taught after Unit 701 and before all other seventh grade MPEC units.

In order to avoid what could be a rather boring series of survey lectures, the writers of this unit have attempted to build a specific situation in which several disciplines contribute to the solution of a problem. Through a series of letters from a boy to his uncle, the students will examine the problems this young man faces with a hypothetical language---Erewhonese. The letters include a wide variety of questions, problems, and information about this language and the culture in which it is spoken. The letters are intended as a source of material and a point of departure for your own class discussions. Certainly there are many additional matters which might be covered through the device of the letters, and you should feel free to add material when you find it appropriate to do so.

Sample Lectures, Sample Discussion Questions, and other procedural notes are included in the left margin of the unit. These are intended as guides, and it is assumed that you will make numerous changes to adapt the material to your own classes. While the lectures are suggested, it must be remembered that the writers of the unit cannot duplicate individual teaching styles. The individual teacher will obviously need to make many changes in order to make these lectures and discussions consistent with his own approach. The suggested student responses to discussion questions should also be seen as guides. In many cases these answers are ideals, and additional questions and comments from the teacher will be necessary to elicit an approximation.

PROCEDURE: Distribute copies of the selection from Walkabout by James Vance Marshall, beginning with "Two...children, brother and sister, are the sole survivors" and ending with "Slowly he walked away into the desert." (pp. and) The novel was published by in . Allow time for class reading. You may wish to have students write their own explanations of the communications breakdown to serve as a basis for the discussion which follows.

Some of the sample discussion questions might be used to give students a guide to their reading.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION

The selection you have just read deals with a communication breakdown among three young people. In this discussion we are going to try to discover some of the reasons why this breakdown occurred, some reasons we might be able to give Peter, who "couldn't grasp what was happening; couldn't understand how things had gone so suddenly and terribly wrong."

1. Re-read paragraph two. What seems to be Mary's attitude toward the native boy?

   (She was grateful to him for saving their lives and had a favorable attitude toward his health and cleanliness. His nakedness, however, shocked her, and she felt guilty every time she looked at him.)

2. Why is it that Mary reacts this way to the boy's nakedness?

   (People in her own culture wear clothing.)

3. Would people in the bush boy's culture feel guilty about nakedness? Why or why not?

   (They would not feel guilty, since such behavior was normal to them.)

4. How is it, then, that we come to possess certain attitudes about such things as clothing, cleanliness, health, etc.?

   (We learn these ideas from the culture in which we grow up. Each culture develops its own behavior patterns.)

NOTE: You may wish to expand these discussion questions by asking students to consider the possible reactions the bush boy might have to the wearing of clothing. Given his cultural background, the wearing of "unnecessary" clothing signaled a highly stylized ritual dance.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

5. Why did Mary call the boy "unfortunate?"

   (She thought, in a sense, that "he didn't know better;" that he lived on a "lost continent;" that they hadn't been reached by missionaries from her own culture.)

6. Do you suppose that the native boy felt unfortunate, that he lived on a lost continent?

   (No; his cultural background was entirely adequate for him.)

7. Do you think part of the communication breakdown could result from the fact that the participants are from two different cultures? Why or why not?

   (Yes. Peter and Mary had very different past experiences from those of the bush boy, and consequently very different expectations about behavior. It is very hard to communicate with someone who shares few of your experiences. Have you ever tried, for example, to talk about rock and roll dances with your grandmother?)

NOTE: Elicit from the students more examples of communication failure resulting from lack of shared experience.

8. If we were to represent past experience of both the sender and receiver by two circles, how could we draw them to show that the two people shared no experiences?

9. How could we draw them to show some overlap of experience?

NOTE: The point should be made that this ideal is never realized in communication.

10. Ideally, how would the circles look in a situation which allowed for maximum communication?

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

11. We have seen one factor, then, which creates a difficulty in communication---a difference in past experience. Now let's consider another part of the communication situation: the actual code or system of signals used. How effective is Peter's first use of language?

    (Peter's attempt is a failure. The bush boy does not speak English and the words are meaningless to him.)

12. Just as there is no shared experience in this communication situation, neither is there a set of shared symbols, a common language. Since spoken language symbols do not work, what must any communication rely upon?

    (Actions serve as signals. Peter, Mary, and the bush boy can only watch one another and try to determine what the actions mean.)

13. What does Peter <u>see</u> which causes him to laugh?

    (The bush boy in girls' pants.)

14. <u>Why</u> does he laugh?

    (It is not what he expects; it is not customary in his culture for boys to wear lace-edged pants. Because what he sees surprises him, he laughs. Actually, the very mention of "panties" itself is avoided in our culture, and many of you probably laughed or felt somewhat uneasy reading this excerpt.)

15. Peter's laugh became a kind of signal in this situation. What did <u>Peter</u> mean by the laugh?

    (He was amused by what he saw, partly due to his uneasiness.)

16. How did the <u>bush boy</u> interpret the laugh?

    (as a cue to begin a ritual dance.)

17. How is it possible that these two boys attached such different meanings to the same symbol?

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

NOTE: To emphasize the importance of context in the meaning of a signal or symbol, you might take some common symbols such as + and > < and put them in different contexts. To illustrate that different cultural backgrounds can result in different ways of "seeing," you might tell the story of the person who showed a postcard with a skyscraper on it to an African. The latter "saw" not a skyscraper, but a well-planned agricultural area with the windows being plots of land.

Emphasize these points for purposes of summing up the discussion.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING:
Eurique Vargas, "The Jet-Age Malady," Saturday Review, May 29, 1965, pp. 18-19. This may be used at any point in the unit

NOTE: Review definition of language from Unit 701 and discuss with students the definition which will be used in 703: Language is the system of learned, conventional spoken symbols held in common by a group (or society or culture) of people in order to communicate.

(The two boys came from two different sets of experience, two different cultures which gave a different meaning to the signal.)

18. How did Mary respond to the bush boy's dance and why?

(Because it was strange to her, she responded with an expression of fear.)

19. How did the bush boy interpret Mary's expression and why?

(In his culture, such an expression means that someone has seen "the image of the Spirit of Death.")

20. Again, the cultural context affects the meaning of a signal, and when there is no overlap of experience a communication breakdown is likely to result. What do you think would have been necessary in order to prevent this communication breakdown?

(a. Shared signals - a common language.

b. Shared experiences - common cultural patterns of behavior)

The study of communication, as we have seen from this one example, can be a very complex undertaking. It involves the past experiences, beliefs, attitudes, language, and actions of the immediate situation. Because of its importance and complexity, scholars in many different fields are interested in the study of communication and, more specifically, in the study of communication through language.

This unit, then, is about how and why language is studied. Almost everything which we know about language comes from various people who have been concerned with the many different aspects of language---what it is, how we learn it, why we learn it, and how it influences the sort of life we will lead. As one student of language has pointed out:

"Language can be studied for many purposes and from many viewpoints. Linguists study language to understand language structure, language history, language varieties, and

TEACHER NOTE: As you introduce the various disciplines, you will want to put the terms on the board, although mastery of terminology is not important at this point in the unit. Some work with prefixes and suffixes may help students learn and relate the various fields of study.

language interrelationships. English teachers study language in order to help students discover how interesting language is. Literary scholars study language as a key to reading and writing literature. Psychologists study language for insight into problems of communication and language learning. Sociologists study language to understand the society it serves. Anthropologists study language as one aspect of the total behavior of people in a culture. All these purposes are important and difficult to achieve."

NOTE: In order to establish that the linguist is interested largely in the structure of language, review briefly with the students some of the topics studied in Unit 701: phonemes, codes, IPA, morphemes, syntax. A short discussion of the communication problems of Helen Keller and Kamala and Amala should emphasize that a great deal more than descriptive linguistics is necessary to an adequate study of language.

In Unit 701, we looked at language from several points of view, but linguistics, one kind of language study, occupied most of our time. In this unit we will look at various kinds of language study.

We could approach a discussion of the various points of view of specialists in any number of ways. A really systematic treatment would take more time and background than we have available. For our purposes I think a hypothetical situation will provide us with an easy way of organizing our study of how and why language is studied. The situation involves the problems that a boy about your age might encounter if he suddenly found himself in a foreign culture without a knowledge of the language. His experience and his letters will provide a practical setting for considering the theories of various types of language study.

NOTE: Call students' attention to the similarities between this situation and that of Walkabout. If you have students within the class who have visited a foreign country, ask them to relate their experiences, emphasizing difficulties in communication.

PROCEDURE: Distribute copies of Letter #1. Allow time for class reading.

ASSIGNMENT: To help the students realize that what makes something appear "strange" is unfamiliarity, have the students complete the following assignment:

Pretend you are a foreigner who has recently arrived in the United States. Write a letter home describing an aspect of our culture as it might appear to an observer not familiar with our patterns of behavior. (Make certain that your description reflects the past experiences and culture of the writer. For example, a person from an island culture might describe a basketball hoop in terms of a fish-net.)

Suggestions:

1. tennis, golf, football, basketball, baseball
2. wedding
3. school dance
4. drive-in movie
5. department store
6. freeways

NOTE TO TEACHER: You might want to play the following recordings before the students begin to write:

1. Bob Newhart, "The Invention of Baseball," in <u>The Button-Down Mind of Bob Newhart</u>.

2. Andy Griffith: "What It Was Was Football."

1. What are some of the things that Chuck called "Strange"?

   (1. the food eaten
   2. the role of women
   3. gestures
   4. features of the language)

Let us look more closely at Chuck's comment: "From what I can see, he calls all of his aunts 'mother' besides calling his own mother 'mother.'"

2. Does Tao's word that we translate as "mother" mean the same thing to him as "mother" means to Chuck?

   (No.)

3. What does Chuck's word "mother" mean?

   (His biological mother.)

4. What does Tao's word "mother" seem to refer to, according to Chuck?

   (His biological mother and her sisters.)

5. Can you think of a possible reason why this is so? In what circumstances, for example, might you have come to use the same name for your mother's sisters as for your biological mother?

   (If they lived with your family and took on the role of "mother.")

6. <u>Kinship terms</u>, or the names we give to our relatives, depend to a large extent on the roles these relatives have with respect to the family. The Hopi and Kaska Indians have a situation much like that described

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

by Chuck in the imaginary culture. Sisters called "mother" help to raise the children, and have similar privileges as the biological mother. They also live with the "family" as we know it.

You may still think it strange that Tao's word for "mother" includes what we call "aunts" but can you think of some kinship terms in English which ignore possible distinctions?

(We use the word "uncle" to refer to both our mother's brothers and our father's brothers. The Hopi Indians, on the other hand, have two separate terms. How would we make this distinction if we wanted to?

We also use the word "brother" to refer to all the male offspring of our parents, while the Pathans of Swat distinguish carefully between older and younger brothers. This distinction may result from the fact that this culture bestows greater responsibilities and privileges on the older brothers.)

Kinship terms, then, reflect how a certain culture is organized and the different roles and status that people have.

NOTE: To emphasize the point that kinship differentiation may be based on many factors and done in varying degrees, you may wish to have the students read the story of an imaginary community from Honigmann, Understanding Culture; Harper and Row, New York, 1963, pp. 70-72.

7. Do you think Chuck could learn to use Tao's word for "mother" correctly during his stay on Erewhon?

(Yes, Chuck could probably realize the differences in Tao's meaning of the word "mother" and his own meaning and come to use it in the same way as speakers of Erewhonese.)

8. Does this then mean that Chuck and Tao would think of the word "mother" and its meaning in the same way?

(No. Chuck and Tao are working from different cultural frameworks. Although they can recognize each other's use of the word, they probably wouldn't really understand the cultural significance of the word. For example, on Erewhon, Chuck could learn to use Tao's word for "mother." This does not mean, however, that when Chuck returns home he will begin calling his Aunt Susan "mother." It is important to realize that learning a foreign language is not the same as comprehending full cultural meanings. More than the observable patterns of behavior, it is the interpretation put on them that is important. As Nelson Brooks points out

in Language and Language Learning, "the black smudge worn on the forehead on a Wednesday in early Spring is more than a dirty face; to the initiate it has a deeply religious meaning." (p. 84)

We said earlier that language is of particular interest to the anthropologist, who seeks to understand many aspects of a given culture. The reading I am distributing to you now should illustrate why an understanding of names and kinship is important. The excerpt is written by an anthropologist living in Nigeria.

PROCEDURE: Distribute selection from Bowen, Return to Laughter; Doubleday-Anchor, Garden City, 1964; pp. 44-47, beginning with the words "Even names gave me trouble" and ending with the words "'is truly so.'" The questions which follow may be used for discussion or a written assignment.

1. In most languages status and role are clearly revealed by how we address people. Most of you, for example, would not call your father by his first name or call President Johnson "Lyndon." Part of learning about a language and the relationships among its speakers is understanding these conventions. What social error does the anthropologist say she made in paragraph 1?

   (She called men by nicknames used only by their age mates.)

2. Why would it be important for an anthropologist not to make such a mistake?

   (She might otherwise offend and alienate the people she wishes to study.)

3. What distinction is made between addresses to married and unmarried women?

   (Only unmarried women are called by name. Married women are called by their father's name.)

4. How does one find out a woman's married name in this culture?

   (By asking her husband the name of her father.)

5. Why might the anthropologist be interested in these conventions, besides to avoid offending people? That is, how might it aid his knowledge about the culture?

   (Studying how people address one another reveals their social position and how they regard one another.)

6. The same anthropologist came to notice how changing names reflected changing

relationships among people. Listen as I read the following paragraph:

"During this same period my relationship to the community also underwent a noticeable change. I was no longer called 'the white woman' I was 'Kako's European,' sometimes even 'our European.' Kako, for reasons of his own . . . was doing his best to have me identified as his 'child.' His intervention between me and my cook was

one step toward this end: the incident showed us as his dependents, among whom he should keep the peace. He encouraged the women of his homestead to include me in all their activities."

We are going to be working with the kinship system, or at least part of the kinship system, of the Tzotzil, an Indian culture of southern Mexico. The Tzotzil base their kinship system on four distinctions. They distinguish according to sex. They also distinguish lineal and non-lineal relatives, that is, those who are related by blood and those who are related by marriage. The Tzotzil make two sorts of distinction according to age. They distinguish between relatives who are older and relatives who are younger than the speaker. They distinguish between relatives who are within one generation of the speaker, and relatives who are more than one generation removed.

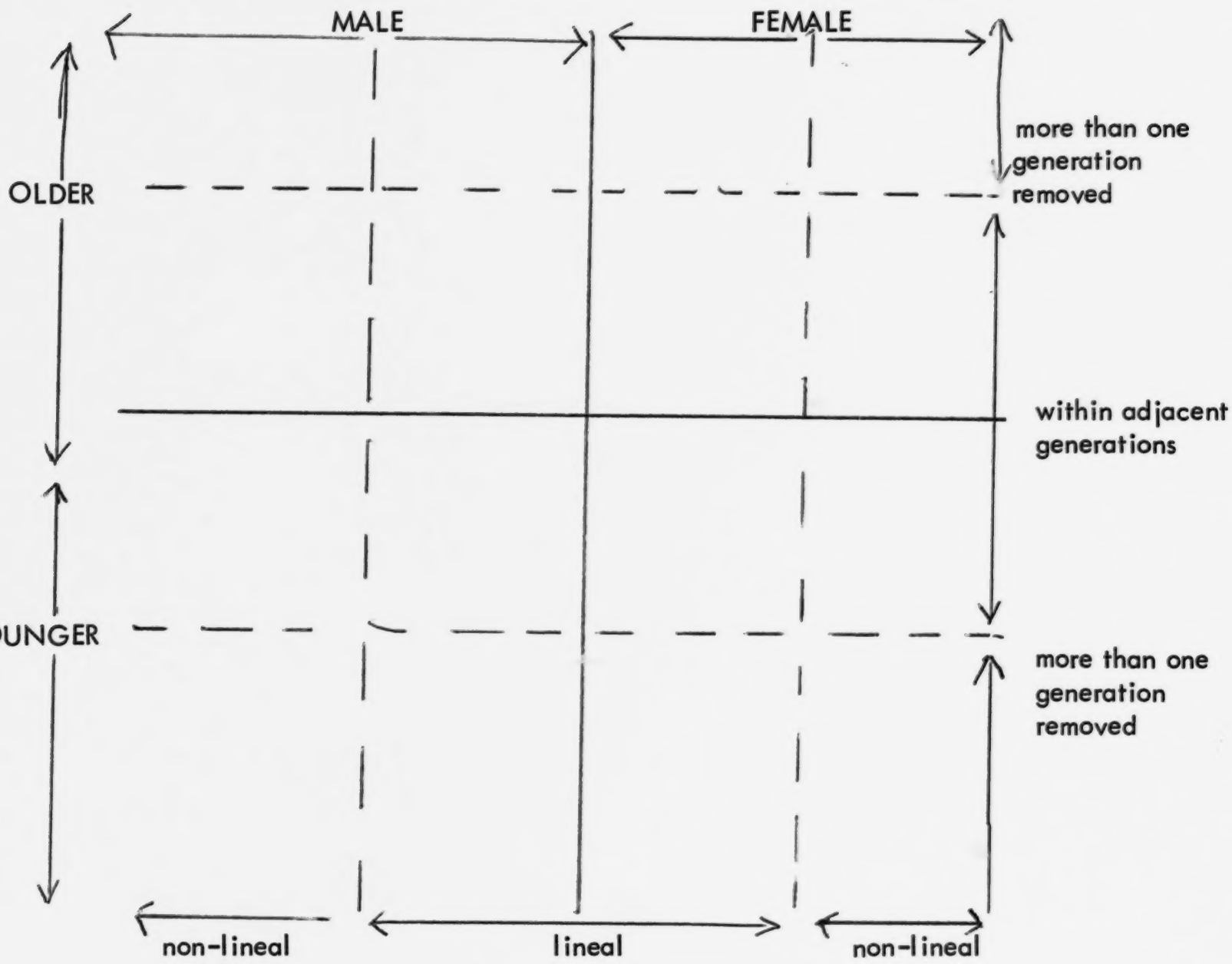
You should know that we are working with only part of the kinship system. These are the terms a man uses; a woman would have to use different ones. There is also another system for in-laws, relatives of one's wife or husband. There are still other names for ritual relatives -- god-parents and god-children. So we are working with only part of a complicated structure.

PROCEDURE: Distribute Worksheet #1.

In this worksheet, assume that the terms like father, daughter, grandmother, etc. are used as we use them.

Worksheet #1

Fill in the chart with the kinship names given below. Then answer the questions.



tot -- father
me' -- mother
taata -- much older non-lineal male relative
nan -- daughter
meme' -- much older non-lineal female relative
bankil -- older non-lineal male relative
nanawel -- grandmother
tatawel -- grandfather
totin -- son
wish -- older non-lineal female relative
ki -- male or female, lineal or non-lineal, much younger relative
kishlel -- younger non-lineal female relative
kits'in -- younger non-lineal male relative

Worksheet #1, page 2

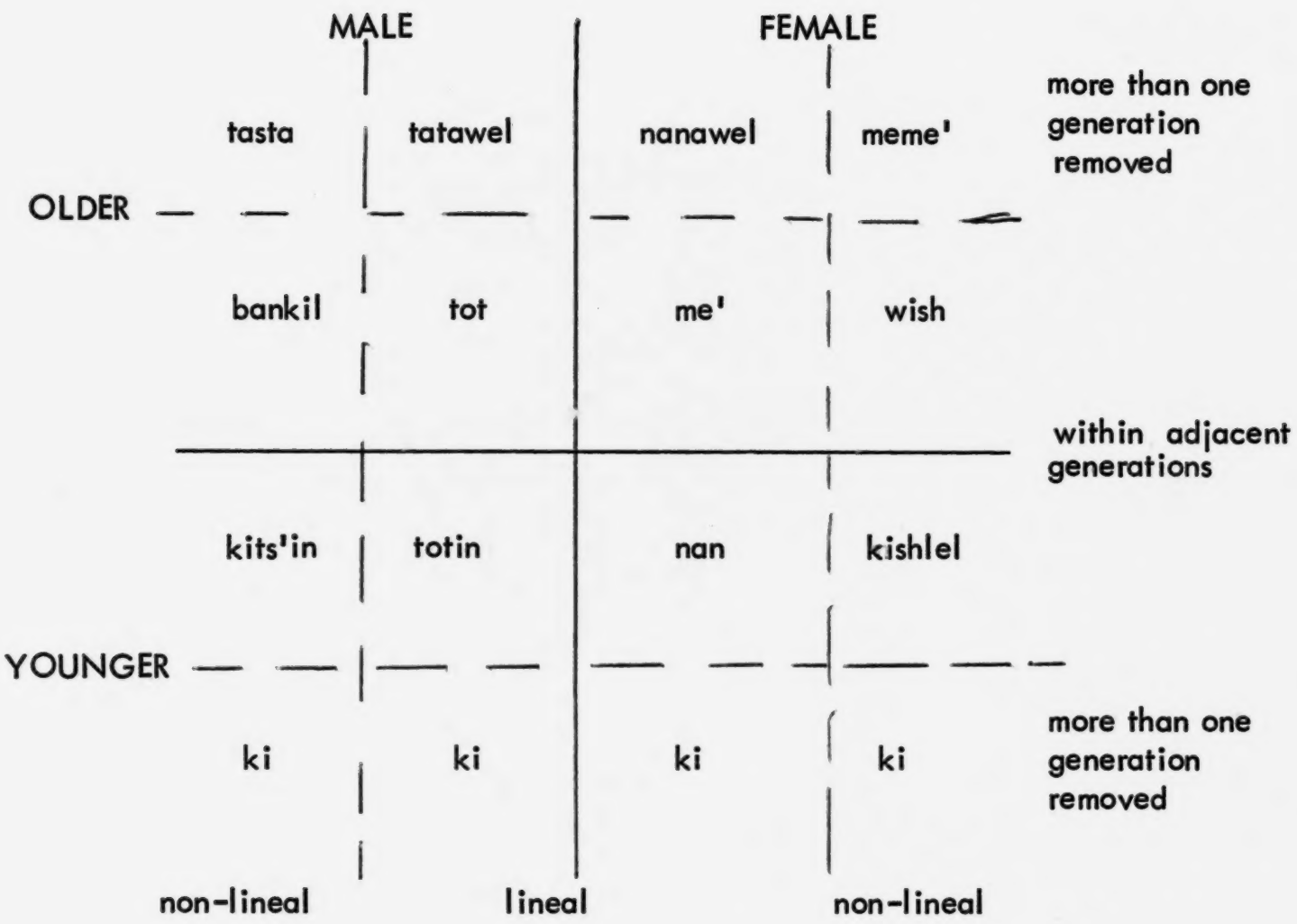
If A calls B "taata," what does B call A? _____

If A is a man and A calls B "bankil," what does B call A? _____

Suppose you are an American visiting the Tzotzil and you want to tell them ab
your aunt Jane. What would you have to call her? _____

What would you call your grandmother's sister? _____

Worksheet #1 KEY



Answers to questions:

1. ki
2. kits'in
3. wish
4. meme'

NOTE: You might have the students consider the following situation. The Zuni Indian has no word for what we would call orange. Does this mean that he does not see this color? For a more lengthy treatment of language and color perception see MPEC Unit 1203.

Our discussion of kinship terms and how people address one another has shown us that language makes distinctions: it categorizes and shows relationships. Language divides man's experiences differently, depending on his cultural framework or the society in which he lives. It is not only with kinship terms, that a language makes distinctions, however. As children, you were taught to notice certain things and ignore others. Consider the way in which you probably learned the word "leg." When you pointed to the part of your body used for walking you were told that it was a "leg." If you questioned still further, pointing to the supporting section of a table you would again receive the answer, "leg." Whereas we make no distinction through language between the leg of a person, animal, or piece of furniture, the Spanish clearly point out differences. They have several words of "leg" depending on whether they are referring to a human leg or an animal leg. Thus, in this case we can see that language has divided the experiences of American speakers and Spanish speakers differently. You will recall the difficulty that Chuck had in understanding Tao's use of the word "mother." Whereas Chuck would distinguish between his mother and his mother's sisters, using the words "mother" and "aunt," Tao would make no distinction. The word mother is used for both of Chuck's categories. By comparing these two situations we can see that certain divisions of experiences are ignored while others are emphasized. The anthropologist is interested in language, then, because its study reveals how the speakers see their world.

Just as no cultures view their relationships to other people in exactly the same way (as reflected by differences in kinship terms), neither do they consider time and space in the same way.

PROCEDURE: Distribute excerpt from Bowen, Return to Laughter, p. 69, beginning with the words "I learned to forget months" and ending with "the yam harvest."

The excerpt I am distributing to you now is written by the same anthropologist who told of her difficulty in naming people. In this selection she describes the sense of time in the Nigerian culture which she studied.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Examine the first sentence carefully. How is the author's calculation or counting of time different from that of the Nigerians?

   (She measures by "weeks," they measure by "cutting through the moons."

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

2. What measurement of time common in our culture did not exist in the African culture?

   (The year.)

3. How did these people seem to view time?

   (The five-day cycle of markets seemed the standard by which people made engagements; others measured by the rains.)

4. Why do you suppose people measured time by seasons and rains?

   (It was significant for their agricultural activities.)

5. What is it about their language which reveals the signfificance of rains in their sense of time?

   ("One could say that a man had done his planting late, but not that the rains had come late.")

Language, then, reflects how the speakers regard time, and for this reason it is of great importance to the anthropologist.

Different cultures not only measure time differently, however, they also value it differently.

6. Can you think of some common expressions in English which reveal how we consider time?

   ("Time flies." "Don't waste time." "My watch is running fast." "I'll spend one hour there.")

It seems then, that Americans consider time to be an important commodity, something to be valued like money and to be distributed in the same fashion. The anthropologist looks at language to discover these kinds of attitudes.

Now let's go back to Chuck's situation and see what problems he had with time in the imaginary culture, Erewhon.

1. What happened to Chuck's attempt to set up a meeting with Tao?

   (Tao didn't show up.)

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

2. How did Chuck explain the fact that Tao "didn't show up?"

   (By pointing out that the sense of time he found in Tao's language was different from his own. "He left on the fifth day" instead of "He stayed five days.")

Let us imagine that Chuck and Tao are observing the same situation where someone has come to Erewhon and stays for five days. He then leaves the island. According to Chuck's letter, Tao would describe the situation by saying, "He left on the fifth day," whereas Chuck would probably say, "He stayed five days." In both cases, language is reflecting different divisions of experience. Essentially then, Tao and Chuck are viewing the situation differently.

Discussion

1. What part of the situation does Tao see?

   (the act of departure?

2. What part does Chuck see?

   (the process of staying)

3. What can we assume about what Tao and Chuck consider important?

   (Tao -- act of the moment is important
   Chuck -- passage of time is important)

4. Can you see any relationship between this and why Tao didn't show up?

   (Since the passage of time is not emphasized in Tao's language, it is not surprising that he would be less concerned than Chuck about how much time passed between events.)

For an example of one kind of difference in views of space, read and discuss excerpt from Bowen, Return to Laughter, p. 52. The following section is devoted to another kind of difference in views of space, one that is very closely related to language. It is hoped that students will begin to see English as a language that varies in its characteristics just as any other language does, rather than as a norm to which other languages may be compared.

TEACHER REFERENCE:

Benjamin Lee Whorf, in Language, Thought, and Reality edited by John B. Carroll; The M.I.T. Press; Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1964, pp. 145-146.

PROCEDURE

Write on the board

I don't understand you.	I don't follow you.
He was misbehaving.	He was out of line.
This is a prudent man.	This is a man with foresight.

DISCUSSION

1. I have written two lists of common expressions on the board. Do you find any difference between the corresponding expressions in the two columns? Does the expression "I don't follow you" make you think about anything more than the expression "I don't understand you" does?

   (Get students' reactions to each set of expressions and entertain suggestions about differences between those in column 1 and those in column 2. The students won't have any name for what the expressions in column 2 have in common, but they will probably notice that they tend to locate abstract ideas in space, whereas the others do not.)

   The expressions in the second column locate abstract ideas in space. (summarize students' reactions:) The first one makes you think of someone's thoughts failing to follow another person's thoughts and getting lost. The second one makes you think of a line which represents proper behavior, and of a kind of behavior which is improper and therefore out of line. The third one makes you think of someone looking into the future, as though the future were something that could be seen. But actually, the ideas of not understanding, of misbehavior, of prudence -- do these actually exist in space?

Review meaning of abstract from Unit 701.

2. When we talked about the words "abstract" and "concrete," what did we say they meant?

   (concrete things we can perceive with our senses, abstract ideas we cannot)

3. Would you place not understanding, misbehavior, prudence, toward the concrete end or toward the abstract end of a scale?

(toward the abstract end, because they cannot be perceived with the senses.)

They cannot be perceived with the senses, but these expressions make you think about them as if they actually exist in space. An early linguistic anthropologist, Benjamin Lee Whorf, noticed this characteristic of the English language, and of other European languages. These languages, he says, have a tendency to express abstract, nonspatial ideas in spatial terms. That is, English sets up a kind of imaginary space that we use when thinking and talking about ideas that cannot be perceived with the senses and do not exist in any real space.

4. Whorf says that English is rich in common expressions of this kind. Can you think of some?

A list of common expressions is provided. At first it will be necessary to suggest them to the students, then they should be able to think of some themselves.

stop beating around the bush
come to the point
stick to the straight and narrow
beyond me, above me, over my head
follow in his father's footsteps
turning point, crossroads in life
I didn't get it, catch it
follow a line of thought, train of thought
bird's-eye view
deviant behavior
an all-encompassing plan
in a rut
in the groove
aside from all that
beside the point
beyond the call of duty
outside the scope of this paper
narrow down your topic
narrow-minded, broad-minded attitude
foundation, basis, framework of argument
way out, far out behavior
an in joke
approach to a problem
perspective on a problem

According to Whorf, English is so full of expressions of this kind that we can hardly

refer to the simplest nonspatial situation without constantly using spatial expressions. We can't talk very long without using them, and furthermore we are rarely aware of it when we do. Listen to this sentence Whorf made up to illustrate his point: "I grasp the thread of another's arguments, but if its level is over my head my attention may wander and lose touch with the drift of it, so that when he comes to his point we differ widely, our views being indeed so far apart that the things he says appear much too arbitrary, or even a lot of nonsense."

5. How many words or phrases in this sentence can you identify that spatialize abstract ideas?

CLASS EXERCISE
Have the class try to express the same ideas without using any spatial metaphors.

In a study of the Hopi Indian language, Whorf showed that this characteristic, which seems so natural to us that we are not even aware of it, does not occur in all languages. In Hopi speech, use of space terms when there is no space involved is simply not there. Hopi has means of expressing nonspatial ideas without referring to any imaginary space, and this indicates not only a difference between the ways we and the Hopi talk, but also a difference between the ways we and the Hopi think.

We have seen that language is both <u>influenced by</u> and <u>reflects</u> such things as kinship patterns, viewpoints of time, and viewpoints of space. Linguistic anthropologists sometimes talk about language as both a "mirror" and a "map" of experience. By "mirror," they mean that language reflects those problems, needs, and values that are most important in a culture. We will talk about this many more times, so I'll only give one example here. The Eskimo has many words for snow, depending on whether it is falling, on the ground, hard, slushy -- the list goes on and on. Distinctions between kinds of snow are crucial to the Eskimo, but of little concern to us. The fact that they have many words for snow <u>mirrors</u> an important aspect of their culture.

NOTE: The mirror/map metaphor is taken from Jean Malmstrom's <u>Language in Society</u>; Hayden Book Company, Inc., New York, 1965.

When linguists speak of language as a "map" of culture, they mean that language divides up man's experience in various ways.

6. Can you think of any experiences which Chuck mentioned in his letter that illustrate language as a map of culture?

   (direct discussion to Chuck's experience with the word for tree.)

ACTIVITY

To illustrate how language functions to map reality, do experiment 1 with the students. Instructions are provided on the following page.

Unit 703

DIRECTIONS TO TEACHER FOR PERCEPTION EXPERIMENT:

This experiement is designed to illustrate that perception is influenced by the labels which we give things. In other words, language is a "map" of reality. Procedure: Divide the class in half. (If possible, move the desks so that the two halves may not observe one another.)

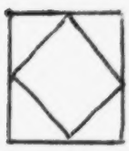
To one half of the class distribute copies of Sheet I, and to the other half copies of Sheet II. Tell the students that they are to memorize the pairs of names and figures and that later they will be asked to reproduce the figures when the names are provided. Caution the students that since this is an experiement, they should not observe what other students are doing.

After about 10 minutes, collect the ditto sheets from the students. (You may then proceed to your regular lesson plan.) Near the end of the class period, distribute sheets of paper with only the original word lists reproduced. Ask the students to reproduce the figures they saw at the beginning of the hour.

When the results are compared, it should be obvious that the reproductions of the figures were influenced by the names paired with them. (See "KEY" for sample results.)

Unit 703
EXPERIMENT 1

I.

NAMES	FIGURES
CURTAINS IN A WINDOW	
BOTTLE	
CRESCENT MOON	
EYEGLASSES	
SEVEN	
KIDNEY BEAN	

Unit 703
EXPERIMENT I

II.

NAMES	FIGURES
DIAMOND IN A RECTANGLE	
STIRRUP	
LETTER "C"	
DUMBBELLS	
FOUR	
CANOE	

Unit 703

KEY

reproduced figure	word list 1	stimulus figures	word list 2	reproduced figure
	curtains in a window		diamond in a rectangle	
	bottle		stirrup	
	crescent moon		letter "c"	
	bee hive		hat	
	eye glasses		dumbbells	
	seven		four	
	ship's wheel		sun	
	hour glass		table	
	kidney bean		canoe	
	pine tree		trowel	
	gun		broom	
	two		eight	

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

PROCEDURE: Distribute excerpt from Bowen, Return to Laughter, p. 16, beginning with "these people are farmers." It is suggested that the students be asked to explain independently in writing how language functions as a mirror and/or map in the Nigerian culture described by the anthropologist. Possible questions to structure the assignment are at the right. (Sample student answers are in parentheses.)

QUESTIONS BASED ON EXCERPT

1. Why did Mrs. Bowen, the anthropologist, have such difficulty learning the names for plants?

   (There were many more names to learn than in English.)

2. How, in this case, do the names serve as a mirror of the culture they describe?

   (The people live in an agricultural society; plants are extremely important and distinctions among them necessary.)

3. Why couldn't the anthropologist "see" the same differences among the plants as the Nigerians saw? In other words, how does the Nigerian language serve to map reality for the speakers?

   (If Mrs. Bowen as a child had had to learn many terms for plants, she would have had to recognize attributes which distinguished one from the other.)

4. This excerpt says that Kako ignored her questions about the names of the women. Why is this so? (Recall previous excerpt on naming.)

   (To find out the name of a married woman, you must ask the son of the woman.)

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of anything that is especially important to us in our society and therefore represented by many words?

   (baseball, automobiles)

2. What are some of the special words we have in these areas?

   (Students' answers will depend on the areas named.)

NOTE: The teacher should select one area of central concern to our society or to the students (such as a hobby or sport) and ask the students to supply terms. These terms should be placed on the board according to the principles of subordination and superordination discussed in Unit 702. (The teacher might use the area of cars, dealing with words related to distinctions in size, make, age, color, horsepower.)

You can see that because a culture develops a large store of words for things that are important to the people, that the anthropologist would be interested in studying language.

NOTE TO THE TEACHER: Except for the assignment which follows, this concludes the section on the anthropologist's interest in language and culture. You will no doubt wish to structure your own review discussion, but this statement by an anthropologist may help to give it focus:

"Language interweaves with practically everything in culture. Kinship, so important in most of the world, pivots around statuses, and each status is known by a linguistic term. Variations in speech index a person's rank, education, or foreign background. Ritual depends heavily on words. Almost every profession and branch of work--from medicine to carpentry--constructs its own argot or idiom by which phenomena important to specialists can be identified...Language is not just a vehicle of communication. It also confines the way persons think of and perceive their world. Since action often follows from the way persons think of and perceive their world."

(From Understanding Culture, by John J. Honigmann. (New York: Harper & Row), 1963, pp. 154-155.)

CONCLUDING ACTIVITY IN LANGUAGE/CULTURE SECTION

Let us now imagine that each of you is an anthropologist interested in the relationship between behavior and language. Let us suppose that you are put in a situation similar to that described by George Orwell in his novel, 1984.

PROCEDURE: Distribute excerpt from Malmstrom, Language in Society, pp. 148-150, ending with the words "mystical satisfaction." Allow time for reading.

Although 1984 is a piece of fiction, it reveals much about the relationship between language and behavior in society. You are to write a short essay about Newspeak as a map and a mirror of Oceania. In your essay, be sure you answer the following questions:

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

> We have seen that Newspeak is the official language of Oceania. What is the chief characteristic of this language? Since a language is devised to meet the needs of a given society, consider what need Newspeak is meeting. In what ways does Newspeak mirror and map the society of Oceania? Consider especially the following quote:
>
> "Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thought-crime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it."

SAMPLE TRANSITION TO NEXT SECTION OF UNIT

We have seen that although Chuck learned Erewhonese, he translated these words and ideas back into his own framework of experience. We might therefore assume that he never really understood the customs and behavior of the Erewhonians in the same way that Tao did. Because Chuck was judging and observing Erewhonian life in terms of his own background in the United states, we might say that he had a subjective viewpoint. Nevertheless, as Chuck spent more time in the new culture, learning to communicate with the people, his point of view changed. the "strange things" on Erewhon began to seem more sensible to him because he had now experienced some of the Erewhonian life himself and was somewhat familiar with the language which described this way of life. He was able to look at the new culture as different from, not inferior to his own. We might therefore say that his viewpoint was becoming more objective.

SAMPLE INTRODUCTION

I will distribute to you shortly a second letter from Chuck. We are to assume that he has decided to stay on the island, and that it is six years after his first letter.

PROCEDURE: Distribute Letter #2. Allow time for class reading.

In this discussion we are going to be concerned with how Chuck taught and the way the Peace Corps volunteers learned Erewhonese. We will want to recall also how Chuck himself learned the language when he came to the island and the problems Kamala and Amala and Helen Keller had learning language. (Unit 701). As we attempt to answer some important questions about Chuck's experience with language, we shall see again that many different kinds of people in our society devote their lives to studying these problems.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Chuck tells us that the Peace Corps volunteers were confused on the island. Why do you think this is true?

   (Because the volunteers could not speak to the Erewhonians, they could only observe, and what they observed was strange and confusing.)

2. What was their main reason for wanting to find Chuck?

   (They felt the need for verbal communication and wanted Chuck to be their interpreter.)

You will recall that Chuck himself had been confused and afraid when he found himself on Erewhon. His first letter suggests, however, that as he learned the language things seemed less strange and he felt he knew and understood the people better. The need that Chuck and the Peace Corps volunteers felt to communicate through speech is quite natural. In fact, an anthropologist has said, "The primary social value of speech lies in getting individuals to work more effectively together and in easing social tensions."

NOTE: Have students support with examples from their own experience. Examples: conversation with relatives at family gatherings; sitting in a waiting room with someone for a long period of time until one of the persons feels the need to speak; having to entertain for a few minutes a guest of your parents while they are away.

Unit 703
Letter #2

Dear Uncle Stanley,

I guess my letters during my six years here on Erewhon have caused quite a stir at home. Since I last wrote to you a group of Peace Corps volunteers arrived and headed straight for my hut. Seems they had read in newspapers and magazines about my living here and my deciding not to return to the United States. I suppose they were anxious to see how an American ever managed to live for so long on a faraway tropical island, but more than that, they needed my help. You see, they planned to set up a school here, but none of the volunteers knew any Erewhonese. They hoped I would be their interpreter. I agreed to do it. Especially when I saw how confused they were--about as confused as I was when I first found myself on Erewhon! I'll never forget that helpless feeling of not understanding what the natives were mumbling or what they were doing and why. Remember that first letter when I had just figured out that Erewhonians signaled "yes" and "no" with their hands instead of nodding or shaking their heads? Until I figured out things like that, I was miserable. Well, these Peace Corps people were having the same problems. So I had a job.

It wasn't very long before the visitors got dissatisfied with my job as interpreter, though. It wasn't that I was a lousy interpreter, but that the volunteers saw that they couldn't <u>really</u> get to know the Erewhonians or be trusted by them until they could use the language. How would they ever get their school set up that way? Guess what my next job was--teacher of Erewhonese to the Peace Corps group!

I was scared stiff to try it, because it has taken me over six years of talking to the natives to feel at all comfortable with my new language. Besides, when I learned it, I was all alone and had to speak to survive! There were no other people around to speak English and help out. Somehow I knew I had to figure out a way to teach these people in a very short time enough Erewhonese so that they could get to know the people and start the school.

The first day was pretty bad, because everyone wanted some sort of book to take home at night to study. I had a really hard time convincing them that they had to listen carefully and then try to mimick the people. I told them about how I finally learned the word for "come" in Erewhonese. I sure didn't use a book! All I could do was <u>watch</u> what they did and try to find the right <u>sounds</u> to go with it. After that it was just practice. Another reason I couldn't give them a book was that Erewhonese has no writing! I think I mentioned that to you before.

Well, there was no end to my problems. All the volunteers kept coming in wanting to know the name for something or other on the island. I think I already told you--for some words in Erewhonese there is no English word! Take clams. One person wanted to know the word for clam. I couldn't tell him, because in Erewhonese there are ten or fifteen words for clam, clams you can eat, clams you can't eat, clams of different colors, clams found in certain kinds of water. The person who asked the question said he thought Erewhonese must be a very strange language. So did I when I first came to the island. But it all seems pretty sensible now.

Unit 703
Letter #2 (Continued)

I tried teaching them some of the words for things, but this didn't work because they couldn't put them together. They still couldn't say anything! What I decided to do was figure out some of the most common sentences the natives use and teach these. This way the volunteers could start talking to the people about everyday things and get on with their school. I started with sentences like "What is your name?" "I want some (kind of food or material)" and "How can I get to the straw hut of so-and-so?" After a lot of tries and wasted time, I saw that the best way to do it was to repeat a sentence over and over and have the volunteers mimick me each time until they finally had it. Sometimes, if I wasn't careful to tell them which try sounded best, they would remember the wrong one.

All of this was much harder than it probably sounds to you. In the first place, Erewhonese has some sounds English doesn't have and they're really hard to pronounce. Like a kind of "clicking" sound in your throat. The Peace Corps people didn't think it was worth bothering with, but this little sound is pretty important. You have to use it on the ends of words when you're speaking to some Erewhonians--people older than you, important people, or people you don't know very well. If you don't add it to the words, the person you're talking to gets very upset. You know, like the president of the United States would be if you called him by his first name. To make things even worse, this clicking noise is really hard to make. It takes a long time before your tongue and throat get used to it.

About the worst thing the volunteers had to learn was the difference in, well, I guess you'd call it the order of words. It's pretty confusing at first. Instead of "John goes home" you have something like "To home goes John." And I suppose you remember from a letter a long time ago that not all Erewhonians speak exactly alike. Sure, you can understand them all if you listen carefully, but the volunteers had to get used to listening to differences between the mud-hutters and the straw-hutters.

Boy, they really got discouraged sometimes. And so did I. But practice helps, and things are getting better. They can understand each other now, and the school is started. I just wish the Peace Corps people had learned some Erewhonese before they came. It all would have been a lot easier. Well, maybe our next step will be to figure out a way of writing it down so we can show you how Erewhonese works.

Your nephew,

Chuck

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

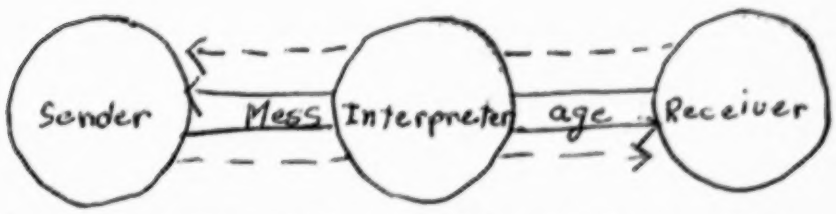
3. Chuck tells us that the Peace Corps volunteers were not satisfied to have him as their interpreter for very long. Why do you suppose this is true?

   (It was frustrating not to talk to the people directly. They decided that they must learn Erewhonese.)

You have probably experienced this same frustration, only under different circumstances. Suppose you are in the bathtub when a friend calls about arrangements for the evening's party. Your mother must speak to the friend for you, although you can tell her what to say.

4. Why do you think you would rather talk to the friend yourself?

   (You cannot talk to the other person directly and since you receive no feedback from him, you are never certain that communication has taken place. In addition, you may fear that the intervening party has somehow changed your original message.)



Chuck, them, was asked to teach the Peace Corps volunteers Erewhonese.

NOTE: Refer to a communication model which contains an interpreter. Lead students to see that in a situation with an interpreter, the message is not going from sender to receiver directly, and in similar fashion, the feedback is interrupted.

NOTE: You may wish to discuss Kamala and Amala, Helen Keller, Chuck, and a baby in terms of language learning. Suggested bases for comaprison: time available for learning, age of the learner, motivation for learning.

5. What are some other situations we have discussed which have involved someone learning language?

   (Kamala and Amala; Helen Keller)

6. Are there any other situations in which you yourself have been able to observe or participate in language learning?

   (Younger brothers and sisters learning English; foreign language classes)

NOTE: The idea of positive and negative reinforcement is easily approached through a consideration of training pets, with which most students are familiar.

7. Keeping in mind what you have observed and also what Chuck tells us about the way he learned the words for "come" (Letter 2, what seems to be involved when a person is learning to say something in the new language? What processes seem to be involved?

   (1. He listens 2. He imitates.
   3. He repeats. 4. He is "rewarded" or "punished.")

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

NOTE: If you speak a foreign language or can invite a foreign language teacher to the class, have the students learn to say a short sentence in another language through the process of listening, imitating and repeating. Point out how the teacher "rewards" or "punishes" them by approving or correcting their responses.

We have seen that the anthropologist is most interested in language as it relates to <u>culture</u>. The scholar most interested in language as it relates to <u>learning</u> is called a <u>psychologist</u>.

8. How do you suppose psychologists decided upon the processes a person goes through when learning a language?

   (By observation of young children learning their native language.)

Those of you who are taking a foreign language now may notice that your teacher has you go through the same process when you are learning new expressions.

9. What is different, however, between a baby learning his native language and a student learning a foreign language in school?

   (There are numberous differences, but the most significant are that the baby hears and practices up to 12 hours a day, whereas students spend merely one or two hours a day speaking the language; also the baby is surrounded by native speakers and the culture of the language speakers, whereas the students are learning a foreign language in their own culture. Finally, babies do not encounter interference between native language and second language, a concern which will be considered later.)

10. Four language skills have been identified: reading, writing, listening, speaking. In what <u>order</u> are these skills ordinarily learned?

    (Responses will vary.)

11. Now think back to your observations of your younger brothers or sisters or recall the development of your own language skills. What was the order?

    (Listening, speaking, reading, writing.)

The materials used in modern foreign language teaching today are influenced by the psychologist's statements about how a person learns language. The trend today is to have students in school follow the same progression of skills as a small child learning a native language.

Learning a language, as you can see, is a very complex process. But Chuck found out that teaching it is also very difficult. Let's see why.

NOTE: Again, if a foreign language teacher is available, a demonstration would be valuable.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Even though Chuck tells us that he speaks Erewhonese and feels "comfortable" with it, he says he was "scared stiff" to teach it. Why do you think this is so? Why isn't being able to speak the language enough to be able to teach it?

   (Distinguish knowing (using) something from knowing <u>about</u> something. Ask students to suggest skills a person can possess without being able to articulate the principles involved. Point out that the ability to use language is one of these skills. Others: swimming, playing the piano, typing, riding a bicycle.)

IMPORTANT GENERALIZATION

REVIEW OF "LANGUAGE AS CODE" IN UNIT 701.

2. In Unit 701 we spoke of language as a code. Who remembers the parts of this code?

   (sounds, words, sentences)

3. Could Chuck <u>use</u> the code?

   (Yes; enough to communicate with the Erewhonians.)

POSSIBLE ASSIGNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES: Have the students take a skill such as bicycle riding, piano playing, swimming which they can perform, but which they have not <u>explained</u>. In a short paragraph they must explain to someone else <u>how</u> to perform the skill. This assignment should make clear the difference between <u>doing</u> and <u>knowing about</u>.

4. What else did Chuck have to know before he could <u>teach</u> this code to someone else?

   (He had to know about the code, to be able to organize his knowledge about the code into learning experiences for others.)

5. Does anyone recall the name of the scholar who studies the <u>structure</u> (code) of a language?

   (The linguist; cf. Unit 701)

The <u>psychologist</u> and the <u>linguist</u>, then, are two kinds of men besides the <u>anthropologist</u> who are interested in studying language. I should point out that some fields within linguistics and psychology are so closely related that there are some people who deal with both areas. Because of this, they are called <u>psycholinguists</u>. Let's go back over Chuck's letter and take a closer look at the problems he and the Peace Corps people encountered. Then we might come to some understanding of how psychologists and linguists would deal with these problems.

1. Chuck's students came to him expecting to learn language from a book. Can you give some reasons why this wouldn't work?

   (a. Erewhonese has no written language, and no such books would exist.
   b. <u>Listening</u> and <u>speaking</u> should come before reading and writing.)

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

NOTE: Review how language is learned through imitation and repetition, and stress the primacy of speech. If the students were given the opportunity to learn a few expressions in a foreign language, relate these points to their own experience.

NOTE: A successful activity here is to have the foreign language teachers come in for a few minutes and have the students attempt to reproduce phonemes which English does not have.

2. You have no doubt heard the expression "learn by doing." What does it mean and how does this relate to language learning?

   (It means that learning a skill involves performance of that skill and constant practice. The Peace Corps volunteers, if they had used a book, would have received no practice in speaking the language.)

Psycholgoists are also concerned with this principle. They have found that active participation is often necessary for efficient and long-lasting learning. A person learning language, then, must listen and speak, practicing constantly.

3. Chuck tried to tell the students not to worry about a book, but to listen carefully to the sounds the natives were saying. Which man whom we have studied would be concerned with finding out what sounds make up the code of a certain language?

   (Linguist; students may recall the term phonetician from MPEC Unit 701.)

4. Are the sounds of every language the same? How would you support your answer?

   (No;
   Chuck says that Erewhonese has some sounds which English doesn't have. Students may also have encountered different phonemes in foreign language classes.)

5. A baby in every culture, studies seem to indicate, is born with the physical capacity to make all possible phonemes. Why don't we continue to make all of these sounds as we grow older and learn a particular language?

   (As the baby "babbles," he makes many more sounds than are in the language of his culture. But since they don't "mean" anything to the adults around him and since he does not hear these sounds or responses to these sounds, he is not "rewarded" or positively reinforced for making them. Thus, they gradually drop out of his speech.)

6. What sound did the Peace Corps people have particular problems with?

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

NOTE: Miriam Makeba has a long-playing record which contains a song with such a "click" phoneme English does not have.

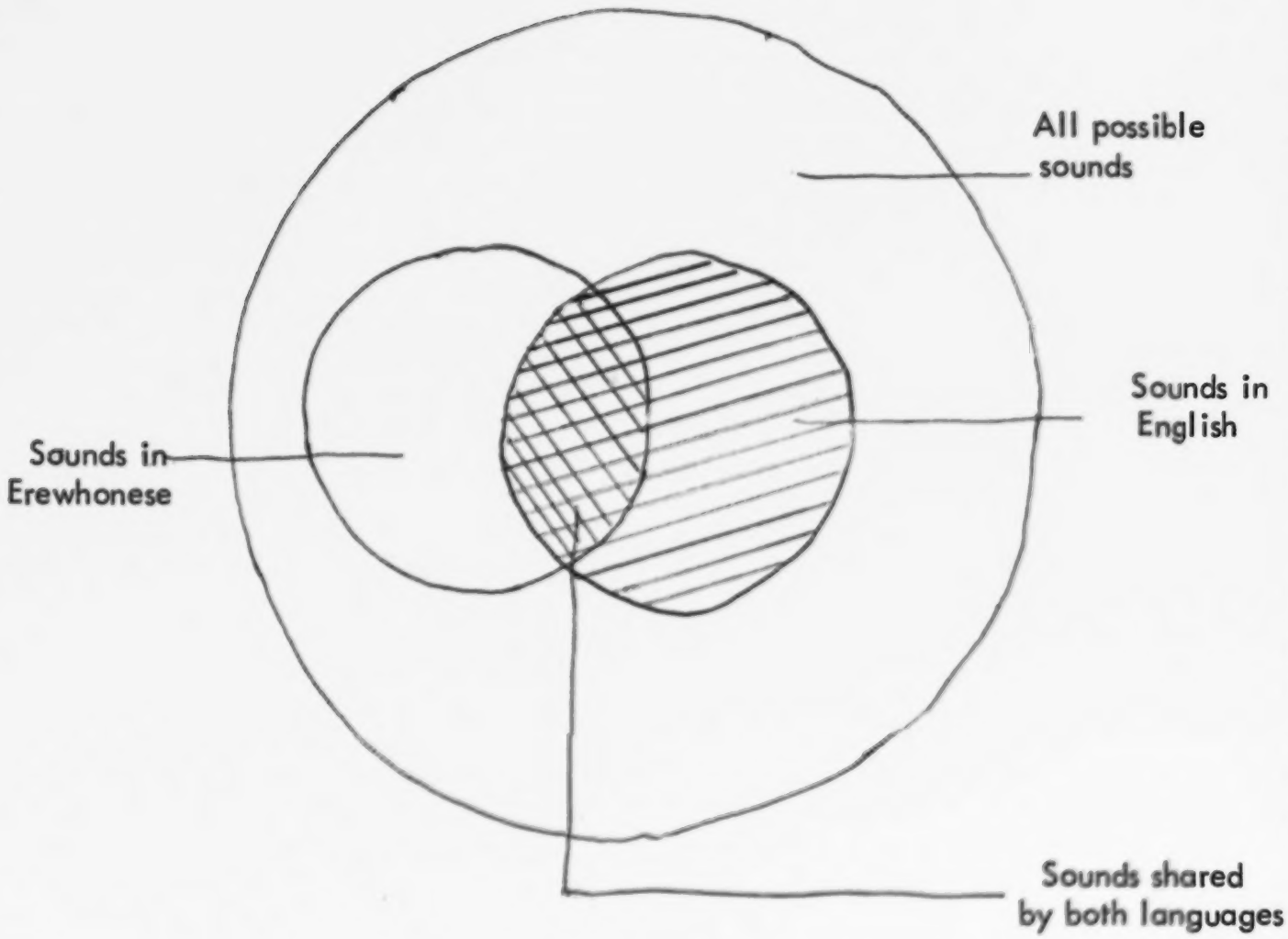
(The "click" sound.)

7. Why is this true?

(English has no such sound.)

Perhaps a visual diagram will help to make clear the relationship between different languages based on phonemes. The comparison below is hypothetical, comparing English and Erewhonese:

USE CHALKBOARD



8. Which circle in the diagram would contain the "click" sound?

("Sounds in Erewhonese")

As you can see, linguists must often be concerned with <u>differences</u> or <u>contrasts</u> between languages. The system of each language is all its own or <u>unique</u>.

9. What problems does this fact present to the language learner?

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Learning a second language is far more than simply learning new words for the things we talk about in our native language. The differences go much deeper than that. In the case of Erewhonese, the learner is faced with sounds to learn that aren't used in his native language.)

Psychologists are also concerned with the differences between languages, because they have found that a student often transfers what he knows of one language to the new language when, in fact, they are not at all similar. Psychologists call this occurrence interference. This phenomenon occurs not only in language.

10. Can you think of any times when knowledge of one skill or area of information has interferred with the learning of something similar, yet different?

NOTE: Have students name and discuss many examples from their own experience.

(Trying to learn the rules of "touch" football after playing regular football, etc.)

Psychologists call this interference. Now let's see what kind of interference the Peace Corps volunteers encountered when learning Erewhonese.

1. Why might there be a kind of interference when they tried to say "come?"

(English has only one word, Erewhonese three.)

NOTE: Discuss with students differences between FORMAL AND INFORMAL ADDRESS.

2. In some cultures you must speak to certain people usually those deserving some sort of respect or high status, differently from the way you address your friends, neighbors, and the people your own age. Why would knowledge of English interfere here?

(We don't make a definite distinction in forms of "you" or in verbs, although we do make some adjustments.)

3. One Peace Corps volunteer asked Chuck the word for clam in Erewhonese. Why couldn't Chuck give him the name?

(Erewhonese has many words for clam.)

4. From what you know about language as a "mirror" of culture, what would you assume is the reason for the large number of words?

(Clams are an important aspect of their lives; distinctions between different kinds are necessary, and thus they need many terms.)

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

5. Can you think of any things that are very important to your culture and consequently have many terms?

   (Automobiles for one example. Ask students for others.)

See introduction to Letter #1.

6. Recall that the Peace Corps volunteer said Erewhonese must be a very "strange" language because it had so many words for clam. Is this an <u>objective</u> or <u>subjective</u> statement?

   (Subjective--he is looking at Erewhonese from the point of view of English.)

The idea of <u>interference</u> or transfer of previous experience is true, then, not only with the language itself, but with meanings.

When we discussed Chuck's first letter home, we saw that we don't have ten or fifteen words for clams, but that there are things in our culture important enough to be represented by many words. In fact, as a class you worked with the general term "automobile" and saw how many distinctions we make with respect to size, color, make, horsepower, age, etc. Erewhonians, in other words, might think that English was a very "strange" language to have so many words for cars!

We pointed out earlier that sports such as baseball and football are important to our society, and because they are important, we have a very specialized set of terms to talk about them. You will recall that Chuck wondered what Tao's impression of a football game would be. How do you think Chuck would describe a football game without all of the words and expressions which we have concerning the sport?

Teacher reference involving idea of transfer:
"Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings...of their native language and culture both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and culture as practiced by natives."
(Robert Lado, <u>Linguistics Across Cultures</u>, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1957.)

ACTIVITY

Your assignment is to write a description of a football game as Chuck would explain it to Tao. Remember that Tao is completely unfamiliar with all of sports terminology.

ALTERNATIVE OR ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Alternative or additional assignment: Have Tao describe the game instead of Chuck. Besides using different terminology, Tao might see different things. (He might feel the quality of the grass as something significant.)

Teacher: Review concept that language divides up our experience.

Sample Lecture-Discussion

Review

1. So far what kinds of contrasts between English and Erewhonese have we seen?

   (sounds, words, cultural meanings and patterns, interference)

2. Review--which specialists that we have mentioned deal with these contrasts?

   (Anthropologist: cultural meanings and patterns. Psychologist: interence and learning. Linguist: contrasts
   a. sounds: phonetician
   b. words: lexicographer)

Another kind of linguist concerned with describing language is the grammarian. He describes how the sounds and words in a particular language combine to make phrases and sentences.

a. How many of you "know" English grammar?
b. Remember our distinction between "knowing how" and "knowing about" something? How can this distinction help us?

(Native speakers know the "how" of English grammar; they may not know "about" English grammar.)

Define grammar; a set of statements about the structure of a language: the way sounds and words are combined into larger patterns.

ATTENTION

Teacher note: Again, stress the fact that there is no 1:1 correspondence between sounds and words and meanings in different languages. No one language is any better than any other for expressing what is needed in its culture. Students may have some difficulty accepting this generalization without further discussion.

3. What differences did the Peace Corps volunteers find in the way the words combined between English and Erewhonese?

   (Mainly, word order and number of words needed. Eg. - "John goes home" and "To home John goes.")

ACTIVITY

Distribute excerpt from Brown, Words and Things; Free Press (a division of Macmillian), New York, 1958; p. 232. Quoting Twain's address to the Vienna Press Club, November 21, 1897, "The Horrors of the German Language."

When we study grammar, then, we are concerned with the way sounds and words are arranged. When we have a consistent pattern of word arrangements, we have a language. No two languages have exactly the same pattern.

In the excerpt you are about to read, Mark Twain is commenting on the German language. As you read, keep these questions in mind:

1. From which linguistic point of view is Twain commenting on German?

   (English)

2. Twain is writing in English. Why does it sound as though he is writing in another language?

   (He is using German word order, etc.)

Allow class time for reading

Answer the questions the students were to consider while reading. (1 and 2 above)

3. Does Twain make any statements which indicate he thinks one language is better than the other?

   (He says he would like to "reform: the separable verb, compress the elaborate construction, etc. Then German would be the "noblest" and "prettiest".)

4. Is this an objective or subjective statement?

5. What seems to be the greatest difference between the two languages in this excerpt?

   (the way the words are arranged)

NOTE: Take a few phrases from the excerpt and re-word them in English word order.

Besides word order, word endings are grammatical signals. Most of you know Pig Latin. How does it work? (Adapted from Malmstrom, p. 21: Language in Society.)

"Pig Latin is made by taking the first sound of a word, placing -ay after it, and moving that syllable to the end of the word. For example, Bill went home would become Ill-bay ent-way ome-hay."

You have seen, then, that any consistent pattern of word order and word endings makes up the "grammar" of a language. It is possible to make up an imaginary grammar of an imaginary language.

ACTIVITY

Since Erewhon has no written grammar, you are going to make up a grammar of Erewhon all of your own. Write a few sentences in a kind of "Pig Latin," changing syllables and word order around. Be sure the changes are consistent. After you have done this, explain the pattern you used. Try to be original.

Teacher Note: On the day assignments are due have each student read his paragraph to the class. See if they can guess the "system" of the language.

We have seen that many problems of the Peace Corps volunteers come from differences between English and Erewhonese:

1. sounds
2. words and word meanings
3. word patterns

One final problem which we are going to examine briefly is a difference within Erewhonese itself.

1. Can anyone recall such a difference among speakers of Erewhonese?

   (The mud-hutters and the straw-hutters talked differently.)

2. How did they speak differently?

   (a. different words for some things
   b. different speeds)

3. Could the Peace Corps volunteers and Chuck understand them?

   (Yes, although it was difficult at first.)

4. Can you think of a similar situation in the United States?

   (Differences between Northerners and Southerners.)

5. Can these two groups understand each other?

   (Yes.)

6. Might it be difficult for a foreigner who had just learned English to understand them at first?

   (Yes; compare to Chuck and the volunteers' situation on Erewhon.)

Sample Lecture-Discussion

Varieties of language which can differ in pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary from other varieties are called <u>dialects</u>. Notice that these are not separate languages. Why do you suppose we do not call them seaparate languages?

(Speakers of different dialects can understand one another.)

The final kind of linguist we are going to name is the one who deals with dialects. He is called the <u>dialectician</u>.

A dialectician is interested in variations which exist within a given language. The differences between the language of mud-hutters and that of straw-hutters are differences <u>within</u> Erewhonese, Differences between a kind of Northern English and a kind of Southern English are differences <u>within</u> American English.

1. Why do we identify these differences as "Northern" and "Southern" English?
   "Northern" and "Southern" English?
   (Because the dialects generally appear in these regions, or geographical parts, of our country.)

2. From Chuck's letter do you get the idea that straw-hutters and mud-hutters live in different geographical parts of Erewhon?

   (No. They seem to be different social classes.

From these two examples - one real example and one imaginary - we might set up two kinds of dialects: regional dialects and class dialects. That is, persons who share regional background are likely to share language habits, too. Persons who share social class are likely to share some language habits as well.

But maybe we can get some more kinds of dialects identified.

3. Earlier we talked about Chuck explaining a football game to Tao. Are there Americans for whom football would be difficult to understand?

   (Yes. Very young children, men who have never seen a game, women who aren't interested.)

   Who speaks the "language" of football?

   (People who watch, play, or are somehow interested in the game.)

4. Have you ever heard a parent or friend talk about a game that you don't really understand?

   (Card games, golf, bowling, chess, parlor games)

   To whom are these people talking when they use the special words?

   (Usually to someone else who plays the game; someone who shares the interest.)

   We might call these <u>avocational</u> dialects. Can you think of others?

5. Have you ever noticed adults using terms which have a special meaning in their jobs?

   (Homemakers "basting" turkeys or fabrics, but doing different things at the time; a carpenter building a soffit or using a router; a mechanic "tuning" an engine or a piano-tuner "tuning" a piano; a medical doctor "working up" a patient; an attorney preparing a brief; hairdressers "teasing" hair; or plumbers "sweating in" a joint)

Who most readily understands such language?

(Persons who know the jobs such people do.)

We could then speak of vocational dialects - the special language of persons who share a vocation.

Notice that in all the kinds of dialects we've listed - regional, class, avocational, vocational - we get the idea of <u>sharing</u> as important. Persons who share geographical, class, avocational, or vocational background or interests tend to develop some language habits to share as well. So dialecticians often find themselves involved in understanding how human beings organize and build groups within a large culture. In this way, dialecticians share interests with <u>sociologists</u> or <u>social psychologists</u>.

Review Discussion

This section of the unit has dealt primarily with the way Chuck and the Peace Corps volunteers learned a new language. In our study we have seen groups of specialists who are concerned with such problems.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which group of men is concerned with how language is learned? (the learning process)

   (Psychologists and psycholinguists)

2. How might the psychologist explain the need of Chuck and the Peace Corps volunteers to learn the language of Erewhon?

   (Speech eases anxiety and social tensions.)

3. According to psycholinguists, what happens when a person learns language? How does he do it?

   (a. he listens
   b. he imitates or mimicks
   c. he organizes
   d. he repeats
   e. he is rewarded or punished for what he says
   f. he reorganizes if necessary)

4. Why, according to the psychologist, couldn't the Peace Corps volunteers learn Erewhonese from studying a book?

   (The student must actively participate or "learn by doing" and in this case there was no book.)

5. How would the psychologist explain the fact that the volunteers had trouble understanding the importance of the click sound, the many words for clam, the difference in word order?

   (Interference; they were transferring English patterns to Erewhonese, assuming that all they had to do was translate by matching words.)

6. What group of men is primarily concerned with how the language code or system operates?

   (Linguists)

7. Which kind of linguist would be most interested in:

   (a. the click sound (phonetician)
   b. the differences between the speech of the mud-hutters and straw-hutters? (dialectician)
   c. the word order of a language (grammarian)

8. Which student of language would be interested in the importance of the click sound?

   (Anthropologist, sociologist, social psychologist)

SUMMARIZING ACTIVITY

1. Assign roles of various kinds of linguists, anthropologists, psychologists to rows or individual students.

2. Each group or student will have to prepare a series of relevant questions to be put to Chuck from the point of view of their discipline.

3. Have teacher or above average student play role of Chuck.

Sample Transition

Distribute Letter #3.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: The following questions are designed primarily to frame the content of the letter. The discussion keys on the specifics of the situation, not the problem. There is also an attempt to extend concepts into the operation of the student.

Keeping these things in mind, let's return to Chuck. I'm giving you another of his letters, this one written about a year after the last.

1. How much do you think the Erewhonians would know about school?

   (Little; the Peace Corps language school would be their only contact.)

2. What does Chuck mean when he talks about not being able to make language do what he want it to do?

   (Develop idea that language is used.)

3. Are you always able to make language do what you want it to?

   (Hardly; draw out the hassles with parents, friends, teacher, etc. that are often problems of language misuse.)

4. What is involved in these misunderstandings?

   (Lead to awareness that it may be semantic or syntactic confusion, a combination of both, or lack of vocabulary needed to operate on the same "wave length.")

5. Are the two purposes (elect alderman--get kids to go to school) related? How?

   (Both desire to cause action by using language.)

6. Do you think that Chuck's idea of contacting the man who organized a political campaign was a wise one? Why?

   (Obviously follows #5.)

7. Chuck says that it does little good to "know" a language. Does the Peace Corps group know Erewhonese as well as Chuck? Does Chuck know Erewhonese as well as the average ten-year-old Erewhonese?

   (Opportunity to review how language is learned and to reiterate the business of language-culture. Can also point out that we "know" language only in relative terms, even our own.)

Unit 703
Letter #3

Dear Uncle Stanley,

Trouble! Trouble! Trouble!

Since I last wrote you things had been going very well--until last week. The Peace Corps group's original intentions had been to set up schools for Erewhonians. The idea seemed so practical at the time, and everyone in the group was excited by the prospect of beginning the work for which they had come. After all, they had worked strenuously for over ten months to learn enough Erewhonese so that the program of instruction could begin.

The opening of school was set for last Monday. We had covered the island in advance telling both the straw- and the mud-hutters that this business of school was the key to the island's future and we expected the children to appear in droves. We had made colorful posters and nailed them on trees around the island. I am sending one of them. As you can see, the poster has a blond girl holding her hands in the shape of a teepee. The Erewhonians, you will recall, have no written language so we used some of the sign language they had developed for the poster. The sign of the teepee means: "You must be with me, I have much to tell." We had hoped that this would persuade the kids to come to school. The girl in the poster is one of the Peace Corps group and is very popular with the kids on the island. They follow her around continually pointing at her hair and smiling. These people had never seen a blond so this girl is quite a curiosity; In addition to the poster, we made brief "pep-talks" for the schools telling the parents that the girl in the poster would be there to teach their children.

But, on Monday, as twenty eager teachers waited for their charges to arrive, nothing happened. Finally at 9:30 or so Tao's younger brother arrived. He was frightened to death and must have been forced to come because of my friendship with Tao.

Somehow all our work has been in vain. It does little good to know a language unless you can use it to do what you think should be done.

I am writing to ask you about that neighbor of yours, the one who managed your campaign when you ran for alderman. I remember the family discussing some of the ways he helped you and I thought perhaps he could be persuaded to assist our noble cause. After all, twenty teachers and one student do not make much of a school. Tell him that he would be helping the Peace Corps and show him the poster I sent.

I will be waiting for word from someone about this.

As ever,

Chuck

NOTE: These activities are intended to offer further opportunity to make concepts operational. They also help set the stage for the next portion of the unit. Though there are not specific right-wrong answers, discussion of the work after it is completed would be helpful before moving on. It is not intended that each student complete all activities but rather that the teacher use the activities as seems intelligent in a specific classroom.

PROCEDURE: Pass out Letter #4. While students read, draw the communication model on the chalkboard.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

NOTE: General discussion of the model is the next order of business. This discussion has as its purpose the development of a working concept of the model on their own communication situations.

Suggested Activities

1. Can you recall any situations where you were not able to make language do what you wanted it to? Describe such a situation in a brief writing. Try to explain what went wrong in addition to telling what happened.

2. The Erewhonians knew little about school. Would this lack of knowledge have anything to do with Chuck's problem? If you think so, explain the relationship.

3. What do you think Chuck's error or errors might have been? If you think about what has been discussed and what you have read, you could make an intelligent analysis of the problem before you hear the advice of an expert. Put your analysis in writing and be ready to discuss it with the class.

4. How would you have gone about getting the Erewhonian children in school? Write some examples of what you would say...draw some posters (Remember, you cannot use written language on your poster.)

1. Does this model apply to spoken communication only?

   (Show its application to other situations, i.e. writing, sign language, traffic signs, etc.)

2. What would the names of the elements be in other communication situations.

   (In speaking speaker-listener, in writing writer-reader, etc.)

3. What elements undergo the most drastic change in a shift from speaker-listener to writer-reader?

   (Feedback, message-develop why of situation.)

4. How is it possible to be sender and receiver at the same time?

   (Excited discussions with everyone participating--teen-age girls at a slumber party.)

5. How efficient are these discussions in terms of messages sent and received?

   (Answer is obvious if you have ever listened to a group of teen-age girls talk...)

Unit 703
Letter #4

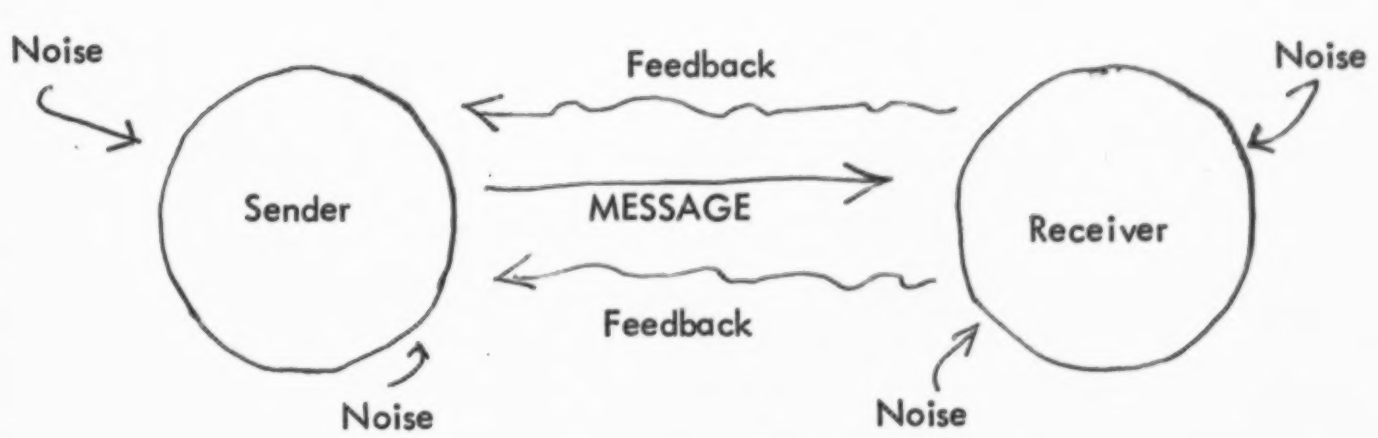
Dear Chuck,

Your uncle has talked to me about you and the Erewhonians quite often. I find what you are doing most interesting, and I am happy to give you what assistance I can.

You may be interested in why your uncle asked me to assist him in his campaign. I teach at the state university here in town. The subject I teach is rhetoric and I am called a rhetorician. These are somewhat frightening words, but my work is quite interesting. It involves studying the techniques of effective language use. We may as well begin our discussion with the word underlined in the last sentence--effective. You are having trouble making language do what you want it to. Your language use then is not effective.

To understand the effective use of language you must know some things about language, people and the society or culture of which they are a part. Some of this information you may already have because of your own attempts to learn Erewhonese and your later efforts to teach it to the Peace Corps group.

So that we are certain to understand each other, let us begin with just what it is we do when we attempt to communicate with someone. Perhaps this drawing will be of help. It is a visual model of the communication process.



Some of what this symbolizes you surely understand; some of it you may not. Let me explain all of it anyway. As I explain I will ask some questions. This is a habit that most teachers have. Please try to answer the questions asked before continuing your reading. If you find you cannot come up with a sensible answer, check back and see if you missed something in your reading. You might also wish to discuss these questions with someone just to check your own thinking.

But back to the communication model. You had to define what language is and what it does for yourself to do your work with the Erewhonian language. You may not have thought you were defining anything, but it would have been extremely difficult to learn and teach Erewhonese without knowing something about how language works and what it does. The model is an attempt to symbolize visually some of the important aspects or parts of the communication process.

You can be either a sender or a receiver, or, in some cases, both. Assume for the moment that you are the sender. You have something you wish to communicate to

Unit 703
Letter #4 (Cont.)

someone else. That someone else is, of course, the receiver. You put what you wish them to understand in some symbolic form, usually spoken language, and address it to the receiver. In most speaking situations you will observe the person to whom you speak. They will indicate their reaction to what you say by smiling, frowning, shrugging their shoulders, yawning, rocking back and forth as you speak or any number of other little activities. If they show no reaction to what you say, it will bother you. What do you suppose this business is called? If you decided that this was feedback, you are quite right.

Feedback is a helpful part of the communication process. There are times, however, when there is no apparent feedback. Can you figure out when this might occur?

Noise, as you might have guessed, symbolizes all the things that get in the way of the message. Not all noise is noisy in the usual sense, however, a coconut falling nearby as you speak to someone is noise in the usual sense and also noise as symbolized in the model. A skunk passing close by may not make noise in the usual sense but will quite likely get in the way of communication for a moment or two without making any sounds at all. Think this over.

You know enough about language to be aware that the sender's message will concern something with which he has had experience. His message cannot help but be related to his experience. Do you know why? The receiver, for the same reasons, receives the message in terms of his experience. You might wish to talk this over with your Peace Corps group to make sure those who are attempting to communicate with the Erewhonians will understand what they are doing.

Should it occur that the experiences of the sender and the receiver are vastly different then the trouble you mentioned in your letter can result.

Before getting to your trouble specifically, however, there is something else we must discuss. This is the matter of what your intentions or reasons for using language may be. We send messages for a number of differnet reasons; you should know about them.

For the moment, however, you think over what I have said about senders, receivers, messages, noise and feedback. I will write another letter in a day or two in which I will tell you what I can about the ways in which language is used.

Sincerely,

Amos Pike

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONTINUED

6. Suppose you were trying to convey the same information to your best friend and to the principal of your school. Would you change the language of the message to suit the receiver?

   (You almost always do--those who don't are considered characters by one group or the other.)

7. What sorts of things can be noisy in terms of the model?

   (Almost anything from nose wiggling to a bird sitting in a tree outside the classroom.)

8. Feedback can be either positive or negative. That is it can bring you both good news and bad...can you explain this?

   (Any news is good perhaps since it means the receiver is being reached, but this discussion should key on positive--I read you and agree, and negative--I read you but I don't agree or I don't read you.)

9. Do you suppose the work of the rhetorician is simple or complex--why?

   (Bring in 701's ideas about language complexity.)

10. What did the rhetorician mean when he said that it would bother the sender if he got no feedback?

    (We need this reinforcement of our message... it is expected, a deadpan expression scares us.)

11. Why should the rhetorician be concerned with the process of communication?

    (Dealing as he does with effective use of language he must know all he can about what we do with language.)

ACTIVITIES

1. Suppose you had an experience that was quite unusual (winning a large prize, getting a ride in a helicopter, meeting the President, etc.). You tell a close friend about it and then are asked to discuss the same experience in a classroom. In a brief writing tell what elements of the model would change or be altered in the shift from one situation (your friend) to the other (the classroom). Tell how they would change and why this change would occur.

2. You are involved in a telephone conversation with a friend. The connection is poor and there is a great deal of static. Describe in writing, using the terminology of the model, the problems that occur in a situation such as this.

NOTE: Before passing out the next letter it would be well to review what the rhetorician said he would say, ie. that he would talk about the reasons for using language. Then distribute Letter #5.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

NOTE: The discussion that follows begins with some summary of concepts from the letter, considers Chuck's problem specifically and then moves to consideration of the relationship between the rhetorician and others who study language.

1. How many ways of those mentioned do you use language?

   (All very likely, even to expressive on serious occasions--such as insulting someone.)

2. The rhetorician mentioned that young children use inquiry almost constantly. It is very sensible that they do so--why?

   (They need information, this is the way it is acquired.)

3. Are there any advantages in using informational sounding language for the purpose of persuasion? For instance, are there occasions when it is better to say "you do that again and I'll slug you" rather than "Please, don't steal my lunch."?

   (There are occasions, particularly when you wish to get immediate response.)

4. The rhetorician must know his receiver quite thoroughly in order to construct his message appropriately. Suppose you were going to talk about reptiles (snakes, lizards, and other curious crawling things.) One of the talks was to be given to a Boy Scout group and one to a Girl Scout group. In what significant ways would your audience differ? How would you "tailor" your message because of this?

   (Boy Scout apt to be more honestly interested and have more knowledge; Girl Scout apt to spend time exhibiting attitudes they think appropriate to the occasion, would probably have less knowledge initially.)

Unit 703
Letter #5

Dear Chuck,

My last letter was concerned mainly with the process of communication as it interests a rhetorician. In this letter I hope to be more specific and, perhaps, give you some help with your problem.

You will recall my writing that we would have to give some thought to the reasons for which we use language--that is what we want to happen as a result of what we say or write. This is a matter of great concern to the rhetorician; it should really be of concern to anyone who uses language.

You must understand that what we will discuss is only a small part of the study of rhetoric. Rhetoric is an extremely complex subject which I will try to discuss in a rather simple fashion.

What ways do we use language then? Think about a typical day in your life on Erewhon. What do you do with language during that day?

You may, early in the day, greet someone with the Erewhonian equivalent of "hello" or "good morning, how are you?" This use of language seems very simple--or does it? Do you really want to know how someone is? The next time one of your Erewhonian friends greets you with "how are you?" take fifteen minutes and tell him in detail. The results should be interesting. Your friend will no doubt refrain from inquiring about your health again unless he really suspects you to be ill. Most societies use language in this way. Discussing the weather is another example of the same thing; in fact, people who study language sometimes call this weather talk. Were you engaged in weather talk when you tried to get the Erewhonian children to come to your school? Just what is the purpose of this language? It must be insulting in most cultures not to respond. If someone says "hello" or whatever to you they expect some sort of response--why?

Later in the day you may have asked someone whether they had seen your friend Tao. What would your purpose be in this situation? Young children make frequent use of this type of language. They always want to know "What" and "Why" and "When" and "Where" and on and on. People concerned with the ways in which language is used call this inquiry.

The person who provides the information about your friend is using language in yet another way. This use of language, as you might guess, is called informational. A conversation is often constructed of someone asking (inquiry) and someone answering (informational). During the course of this sort of conversation the roles will change very rapidly--the inquirer will become the informer, the informer the inquirer, etc. Were you using language in either of these two ways in trying to get the Erewhonian children to attend your school?

During supper you may have tried to persuade one of the Peace Corps group that the toasted grasshoppers the Erewhonians like so well really are good. Perhaps you wanted to get him to eat one and see for himself. This is still another way in which language is used. This use of language is called persuasive; is this how you were using language in trying to get the Erewhonian children in your school?

There is another way in which language is used that I know you have had contact with. This use of language might occur if the Erewhonians had a celebration or

Unit 703
Letter #5 (Cont.)

festival where they sang songs or told stories of great men or events in Erewhonian history. You had experience with this use of language before you arrived at Erewhon, however, when you read a story, saw a play, or heard a song sung. In all those situations people are trying to communicate feelings about various things. This use of language is called <u>expressive</u>; were you using this type of language with the Erewhonians?

I had said that this would be a simple discussion, but I am sure it has seemed extremely complicated to you. Perhaps this complication is due to the nature of language itself. As you are surely aware after your work with the Erewhonians, languages of any sort tend to be frustratingly complex. What I have told you has been simplified considerably. Let me show what I mean with an example or two. Suppose you were talking to Tao about the possibility of going swimming. If you wanted Tao to go with you and he was undecided, you might tell him such things as "The water is just right for swimming" or "The sharks have not bothered anyone all week." Both of these statements sound <u>informative</u>, yet your purpose is really persuasion. You might want to impress on one of the Peace Corps people the danger of going into the jungle at night. Your purpose would be persuasive--you would like to keep them out of the jungle at night--but you might use language that sounds like inquiry, informational or expressive. Can you think of some examples? This might be a good time to stop your reading and talk this over with someone.

Every person who uses language should learn to consider language in the terms we have been discussing. People should know how communication happens and the factors that influence communication. People should also know what sort of language works best in what situations. Chuck, did you ever <u>tell</u> your parents what you were going to do rather than asking them if you could? Did this backfire on you? If so, it is possible that more knowledge of language, what it is and what it does might have helped you. The rhetorician would say that you used informational language when you should have perhaps used inquiry or persuasion.

You made the same sort of mistake when you tried to recruit Erewhonian children for your school. In your poster and your talks you stressed the blond girl telling the children to come to her so that she could tell them something they should know. This was language of an informational-persuasive variety, yet in one of your letters to your uncle you mentioned that no woman in Erewhonian culture ever tries to persuade someone to do or think in any particular way. You said the men are the only ones allowed to do this and that women may ask questions or give simple information. Your use of the girl in the poster and your emphasis on her waiting for the children at school was noisy. So noisy, in fact, that your message never got through. You were defeated before you began. You think this over; I am certain you are enough of a rhetorician now to put the rest of this puzzle together yourself. If you think, it should be obvious what happened; perhaps now you have enough knowledge to organize some effective way of getting the kids in the school.

Sincerely,

Amos Pike

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONTINUED

5. Suppose the same two groups were to be asked to help with a paper sale. How could you appeal to them--what would interest them about a paper sale?

   (Boy Scout might find appeal in working around trucks and other boys; Girl Scout might find appeal at a purely social level and this might include the fact that boys would be present.)

6. Which of the people who study language let the rhetorician know that weather talk occurs in cultures other than our own?

   (Anthropologist or anthropolinguist)

7. Which of the people who study language might help the rhetorician understand why people use weather talk?

   (Psychologist mainly)

8. What <u>is</u> weather talk for?

   (To relate, to let people know we know they are there, to acknowledge another's existence.)

9. Some of the people who study language do so in a scientific way (Who?) Is the rhetorician a scientist? Why or why not?

   (The rhetorician is not a scientist but he profits from the work of scientists. Bring out the humanistic nature of the rhetorician's work and the impossibility of achieving true predictability. What the rhetorician achieves is a normative description.)

10. What influence did the two island groups (Straw-hut--mud-hut) have in Chuck's problem?

    (An educated supposition might be that both groups waited to see what the other would do, neither wanting to be the first to break with island mores.)

11. What influence do you suppose the choice of the blond girl had in Chuck's problem?

    (Probably poor choice since it was obvious that they held the girl in some awe--children following, etc.--they might have felt her somewhat unapproachable in addition to her upsetting tradition by telling someone what to do.)

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONTINUED

12. Which of the men who study language could help the rhetorician:

a. Find out how a particular word is pronounced in various sections of the country?

(Dialectician)

Why would he want to know something like this?

(Drastic differences in pronunciation can be noisy.)

b. Select words that will produce a given response, words that are certain to make people angry, sad, etc.?

(Psychologist--perhaps lexicographer)

c. Find out why it is so difficult to translate what he write in English into Japanese?

(Anthropologist-grammarian--perhaps psychologist)

d. Find several words to substitute for one the psycholinguist tells him is apt to cause wrong response. For instance a substitute for <u>death</u> or <u>vermin</u>?

13. The rhetorician said that what language is and how it is used should be of concern to anyone who uses language. Why did he say that?

(Language is our "window to the world" most of what we are is conditioned by how well we use this window)--(lousy metaphor.)

14. People who know more than you about what language is and how it is used have an advantage over you--why?

(This is it, if no answers come the whole ball of wax is down the drain)--(double plus lousy metaphors.)

ACTIVITIES

NOTE: The following activities are intended to make operative concepts about the use of language. Culminating activities will tie the various viewpoints together

1. Chuck had troubles. Knowing what you do now, how would you have gone about getting the Erewhonian children to school? Describe your plan in a brief writing and be ready to present your plan orally should you be asked to do so.

ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

2. Take a look at advertisements in magazines and newspapers. Find as many examples as you can of language written in a style different than its purpose, i.e. the ad which tells you Chevrolet is number one in national sales (informational) so you should buy it (persuasive.) Try to assemble interesting examples, label them and mount them so that they may be posted in the room.

3. Various parts of our culture tend to use language in much the same way all the time. For instance, young children use inquiry to a great extent. What sort of language use typfies the following groups?

   a. Parents
   b. Teachers
   c. Your friends when talking to you

   In addition to deciding which use is typical, offer your explanation of the situation in writing.

4. Think up some interesting products (an automatic homework machine, a telephone alarm clock that tells girls when to get off the phone, No Calorie Pizza, a machine carried in the pocket that gives your parents all the right answers, Atom Powered Skate Boards, transistorized TV that is worn as contact lenses). Plan an advertising campaign for your product including ads for magazines and commercials for TV and radio. Be prepared to discuss your plan if called upon to do so. Prepare the material and assemble it in a folder. Be sure you can tell people what you are doing with language in your campaign.

Unit 703
Sample Test Items

I. Multiple Choice: Select the best answer.

(e) 1. Which of the following languages is more primitive than English?

a. Swahili
b. Shona (a language of Rhodesia)
c. Bassa (a language of Liberia)
d. all of the abov
e. none of the above

(c) 2. The Kaska Indians, who have only one word to cover both blue and green, encountered difficulty when an anthropologists asked that they discriminate between these two colors. This incident seems to indicate that

a. blue and green are important colors to the Kaska Indians.
b. the Kaska Indians have a visual defect.
c. the structure of a language may affect how the speakers see reality.
d. the language of the Kaska Indians has a smaller vocabulary than does English.

(f) 3. Which of the following can be considered language as defined by most anthropologists and linguists and as defined by this unit?

a. Braille (used by the blind)
b. the whistling of one bird to another
c. mathematical symbols in your textbook
d. a baby's first cry
e. all of the above
f. none of the above

(b) 4. When a child learns language, the natural progression of his skills is

a. speaking, listening, writing, reading.
b. listening, speaking, reading, writing,
c. listening, speaking, writing, reading.
d. reading, writing, speaking, listening.

(c) 5. Dialects are

a. foreign accents.
b. speech habits of the uneducated.
c. regional and social varieties of a language.
d. variations in pronunciation from individual to individual.

Unit 703
Sample Test Continued

II. Essay section

Directions: Imagine that you received the following letter from a friend living in Rhodesia as a foreign exchange student, learning the language called Shona. Write an answer to the letter revealing what you have learned about language and language learning in this unit. Focus on those aspects of John's problem which would be of concern to the anthropologist, the psychologist, and the linguist. Be certain to disagree with and correct any statements in John's letter which you know to be inaccurate.

January 10, 1967

Dear William,

Things haven't been going so well lately. I can't seem to learn much about the people here without knowing their language, but Shona is so much more complicated than English! Just think, there are 18 classes of nouns! I'll never be able to keep them straight. Verbs are different, too. You just put in two letters to change the stem from active to passive; three to indicate you were doing something for somebody; others to show you were getting another person to perform the act. I've been copying down all sorts of exercises from my textbook so I'll know what I'm doing when I start learning how to speak. My main problem is trying to change the tenses of verbs the way we do in English. It doesn't seem to work out.

The vocabulary is odd, too. They don't have any word for "room!" But they sure do have words for native beer brewed by the women. It has a whole vocabulary all its own. Chidyashe, for example, is the cup of beer for the village headman at a beer drink. Chidyavarime is the beer kept for private consumption with friends, and still another variation means the owner's portion of the beer or meat being distributed at a gathering. I can't understand why they need so many words when we can get by with just one.

The funniest thing of all is that they seem to be using foreign words for some things. Nzuzupepa is newspaper and motokari is automobile. Why aren't there Shona words for these things?

I'm just not at all sure I'll get to speak Shona. It sounds impossible when I listen to the people talk. The sounds aren't at all like English, and they actually seem to sing the language! It's a kind of fixed tune, using mainly three notes.

Please let me know if you have any suggestions. I'm quite discouraged.

Your friend,

John

Unit 703
Sample Student Answer Part II

Dear John,

In reply to your letter of January 10th, I am going to see if I can't straighten things out for you. First, is their language really more complicated than English? Or perhaps, it just seems that way because you have to learn it in a short amount of time in order to communicate with Shona speakers. Secondly, the psychologist would be interested in knowing just how you are learning the language. Perhaps, this is where the trouble lies, for the order of skills in learning a language is as follows: 1) listening 2) speaking 3) reading 4) writing. You have been writing and reading before you really started to listen or speak. If you start speaking and listening more than writing and reading will come easier later on. The psychologist would also be interested in this sentence in your letter. "My main problem is trying to change the tenses of verbs the way we do in English." This habit is called "interference." It is when you transfer old language habits (English habits) to the new language (Shona). This won't work because Shona has a different way of changing tenses.

As for this statement, "The vocabulary is odd, too," you seem to be a little subjective (biased). The vocabulary is odd only because it is different from what you are used to. The people of Rhodesia probably think English is "odd" too! This is the anthropologist's line of work-studying language in a given culture. You have mentioned some of the cultural differences in Rhodesia when you said that they didn't have a word for room and had too many words for beer. This is explained by the fact that language is a "mirror." It reflects what is important in a culture. Obviously then, rooms aren't really important while beer seems to mean alot, or be the way of life for these people. In our culture we need a word for room because our houses have many rooms. Beer is not so important as it is just one of many drinks. This principle of the mirror could also explain the newspaper and automobile. Have you seen many newspapers or cars in Rhodesia? Chances are, you haven't. Therefore, the people just don't need a word for these things except when white man brings them, and then just "borrowed" words to describe these things from the white man's language. Are things becoming clearer now?

A linguist would be interested in knowing that sounds in Shona are different from sounds in English. He would suspect this, however, because phonemes are different in every language. You will probably have a hard time caused by interference, again. Because these sounds weren't in English, it's harder for you as these sounds are strange and foreign to you. For the other problem about the way they talk is the anthropologists' work. It is just a cultural difference.

I hope I have made things a bit clearer now. If you have any more problems, just write about them, and I'll try to help all I can.

Your friend,

Kathleen

P.S. The linguist would also be interested in the structure of the sentence with nouns and verbs as you mentioned in the first paragraph of your letter. There is a special branch of linguist for this study of sentence structure - grammarian.

Unit 703
Sample Answer

Dear John,

Sorry to hear that you are so discouraged. But as you know language must be learned. It isn't instinctive and the younger you are the faster you can learn. It just takes time so be patient!

But as I read your letter I saw that you were going about learning Shona all wrong. First of all no language is more primitive than any other. You seem to think Shona is so much more complicated than English but it isn't. Every language is adequate for its culture. Each culture has different patterns of behavior or ways of speaking so this might be why there are so many classes of nouns. Just remember no culture is "better" than another.

Secondly, you said you were copying down all sorts of exercises from a text book. Good heavens John, don't you know how to learn a language? Remember when I was taking German at night school? Our teacher would talk to us in German and we would just listen and listen. Well, the people are your teachers--just listen to them, then try to imitate them and keep recreating this, and you will get reinforcement from the people either positive, if you are speaking the language right or negative if you are speaking it wrong. As for trying to learn out of books that is all wrong. I was taught that the order of skills were 1) listen
2) speak
3) read
4) write.
So try to follow these my boy.

Thirdly you mentioned trying to change verbs the way we do here in America. That, son, is called interference, when you transfer your native language (English) to your new language (Shona). It is best to try and forget English. Do you remember my Peace Corp friends? The ones who were going to Africa to help the people there? Well, they could never learn the language the natives spoke because every time they got away from the natives they spoke English and forgot all about the other language that they were suppose to learn.

You also mentioned all the words the people had for beer and they did not have a word for room. Well, language is a mirror of a culture. It reflects the needs for the word beer. In Rhodesia the beer industry must be quite important.

Remember that book I gave you about the Swat people and how they needed different words or names for the oldest to the youngest brothers because their culture needed it? Well, this is exactly how it is in Rhodesia. Language is also a map of culture. It divides and guides our views of the world so that may be why they have only one word for room. Maybe everything with walls is a room to them. You mention the people using foreign words for automobile and newspaper. They might not have a great need for these words and, therefore, have taken some of ours to represent things in their culture also.

Remember language is different all over. People have different dialects and sounds etc. This is because there is a great need for language to communicate with others. So language in different cultures must be conventional or agreed upon. Language helps socialize man so there is a need for language all over.

Remember what I have told you and do your best in learning the language.

Your friend,

Uncle William

Unit 703
Sample Answer

Dear John,

You need some help from a linguist to solve your problems, since he is skilled in the field of language and language learning.

You can't learn much about the peoples of Rhodesia without knowing Shona because language mirrors culture. In other words, it reflects the values and needs of a culture. The Rhodesian people have many words for beer and no words for room, because beer is of high value and room of little importance to them. We have many words for car because it is important to our culture. Secondly, language maps culture. This means that people of different languages view reality different. For example, one culture may see a difference between blue and green. Another culture may not, therefore, one culture may have several names for these colors while the other culture may have only one word for both colors. The anthropologist is interested in these aspects of language because he is concerned with the culture of people of different languages.

Shona is not more complicated than English. We cannot judge languages as to how hard or easy they are. To the Rhodisians, Shona is easier than English because it (Shona) is their native language.

Shona has 18 classes of nouns because this is what their language pattern and vocabulary usage pattern and vocabulary requires. Our language has less for the same reasons.

Before copying exercises from the book you must learn to speak Shona. The order of skills in language learning is listening, speaking, reading, and then writing. This is similar to the ways a baby learns to speak. The psychologist is concerned with language because he studies the behavior of people. For instance, the way a person learns to speak.

It is impossible to change tenses in Shona the way we do in English. Every language consists of a pattern. The English pattern cannot be put with the Shona language and viceversa. You cannot use the English pattern to change tenses.

All sounds are either made up or imitated. The words nzuzupepa and motokari were obviously imitated after the words newspaper and automobile. Many English words originated in other languages.

Shona does not sound like English because every language has its own set of conventional sounds.

Good luck learning Shona. You will undoubtedly find it easier when you learn some of the facts I pointed out in this letter. Write to me soon.

Your friend,

William

Unit 703
Sample Answer

Dear John,

I can see you have a lot to learn about language. In this letter I'll tell you a few things that may help your problems.

First of all, the main reason you haven't found out very much about the people without knowing the language is because culture is transmitted through language. Language is a map as well as a mirror of the culture. As a map language guides and divides up their view of the world, and language being a mirror, reflects the values, needs, and the important things of their culture. That is why there are so many different words for their native beer. It is important to their culture. There is a man who studies human behavior in a culture called an anthropologist, he would be interested in problems like this.

John, your statement about Shona being much more complicated than English was ethnocentric. No language is more primitive or better than any other and well-developed vocabulary areas indicate what is important to the culture. So remember each language is unique.

As a psychologist could tell you, you're going about learning the language in the wrong way. The order of learning skills is first you listen, then speak, next read, and then write. Your problem with trying to change verb tenses as we do in English is called interference. This is when you transfer your native language habits into the new language. Each language is unique, remember? Each one has its own patterns.

Well, I hope my suggestions will help you in learning the Shona language. Remember, the older you get the more difficult it is to learn a language, so don't get too discouraged. Write soon and tell me how things are going.

Your friend,

William

Unit 703
Sample Test Part III

Carlos Lopez is a twenty year old Mexican who came to the United States seven years ago. He is learning English, but not without many problems. Read each item below and tell which man would most likely deal with the problem. Justify each answer.

anthropologist
psychologist
rhetorician
phonetician
grammarian
lexicographer
dialectician

_____ 1. When conversing, a person from a Spanish-speaking culture will stand much closer to the person he is talking to than an American does. The American usually backs up. The Latin American proceeds to move closer. The Latin American leaves, thinking that the American is unfriendly, while the American leaves thinking that the Latin American is pushy.

_____ 2. In Spanish, a "d" between two vowel sounds is pronounced like a "th" in English. So Carlos says "lather" for "ladder," "writher" for "rider," "rithle" for "riddle."

_____ 3. Carlos was asked to write an essay on automobiles for a composition course at a university. He became very confused with the quantity of terms we have for different types, makes, colors, sizes of cars. Spanish, he said, does not have so many words to describe automobiles.

_____ 4. One problem Carlos has is with time. For example, he was going to be interviewed for a job as productions manager. The interviewer told him to come at 4:30. In Mexican culture, people are accustomed to coming as much as twenty minutes after the appointment time. This is not an insult and no apology is expected. Carlos arrived for the interview at 4:45. The interviewer was upset. Carlos did not get the job.

_____ 5. Carlos finally found a job. He became interested in a girl who worked in the same office. He told her one afternoon that he wanted to take her to a movie. She refused and he was upset when he found that he should have asked rather than tell her.

_____ 6. Spanish shows possession by saying "the book of John," "the car of Mary." Carlos continues to use this word pattern instead of saying "John's book," "Mary's car."

Unit 703
Sample Test Part III Continued

_____ 7. Carlos eventually felt enough at home that he wrote a letter to the editor of the local newspaper protesting an article about Mexican food which he thought inaccurate. He had some difficulty selecting the words he wanted and then getting his ideas organized in an effective way.

_____ 8. Some English and Spanish words are similar in form and meaning. For example: pino-pine, vino-wine, fino-fine. (These are called cognates.) Because they look alike, Carlos tends to transfer Spanish pronunciation to the English word.

_____ 9. Carlos, who had spent most of his seven years in Minnesota, decided to take a trip to Boston. He had a great deal of difficulty understanding the Bostonian pronunciation of words such as "fast," "pass," and "class."

_____ 10. Carlos received a promotion. He became a recruiter for his company in Mexico. He was supposed to convince young Mexicans that their golden opportunities were in the United States. Carlos had to prepare a campaign to be used in persuading the Mexicans that they should go the United States.

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